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HITT Advisory Board Takes Steps to Advance Georgia's Health IT Initiatives

ATLANTA – The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) announced the creation of the new Georgia Office of Health Information Technology and Transparency and adopted a strategic plan yesterday at the Health Information Technology and Transparency (HITT) Advisory Board's monthly meeting.

"Collectively, this new office and our strategic plan will help forge Georgia's health information technology (HIT) goals for improving healthcare for Georgians," said Dr. Rhonda Medows, DCH Commissioner. "We are taking our initiatives to the next level."

The Department's Office of HITT and the HITT Advisory Board will work together to enhance the quality, safety, and transparency of healthcare through the effective use of information technology.

The HITT strategic plan, prepared by the Office of HITT, was presented today at the Board's monthly meeting for approval and adoption. It lays out the broad steps needed to:

- Maintain and promote the Georgia Health Information Exchange (HIE) grant program
- Develop and promote the value of HITT
- Continue the health information transparency initiative
- Conduct HITT outreach and consumer education activities
- Develop the state strategy to implement health information exchange

In addition, the plan identifies future goals and objectives for the Board, such as promoting the adoption of electronic health records and universal e-prescribing (electronic prescribing) for the state.

"This strategic plan is the beginning framework that fine tunes the infinite number of issues involved in implementing and achieving the benefits of HIT," said Dr. Winston Price, Chairman of the HITT Advisory Board. "Ultimately, it provides a systematic approach for reaching our goals."

Also at the board meeting, Dr. Jack M. Chapman Jr., HITT Board member and President of the Medical Association of Georgia, provided an example of e-prescribing. In his comments to the Board, he announced that he served as the General Assembly's "Doctor of the Day" at the state capital on Wednesday and provided e-prescriptions to legislators and state employees.

“The patients that I had a chance to provide e-prescriptions for were extremely happy that their prescriptions would be waiting for them to pick up on the way home,” said Dr. Chapman Jr.

Today’s announcement follows a number of actions taken in recent months to advance Georgia’s health care system through the use of HIT. Efforts included:

- The Department issuing \$853,088 health information exchange (HIE) grants that were awarded to four organizations that will help foster the development of HIE, electronic prescribing, and/or adoption of electronic medical records across Georgia.
- The Department receiving a \$3,929,855 grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to assist with the implementation of Georgia’ Health Information Transparency Web site.

For more information about the Georgia HITT Initiative, visit www.dch.georgia.gov.

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